

REMARKS

Following a careful review of the Office Action and the references applied against the original claims, this application has now been amended in a manner to clarify the patentable aspects of the invention.

The amendments to the claims are believed to address all of the rejections made to the initial claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112. With respect to the issue of whether the storage apparatus is being claimed per se or in combination with the door, it is submitted that the amendment made to claim 1 makes it abundantly clear that it is a storage apparatus that is being claimed, and that the storage apparatus is constructed so that it can be applied to a door of a cabinet. Further, the language “when the brackets are applied thereto” have been deleted, so this language no longer remains an issue. Claim 17 has been amended to call for the door and the hanger in combination. The remaining independent claims are claims 21 and 23, both of which have been amended to delete certain language relating to the door in order to make it clear that what is being claimed is the hanger bracket (claim 21) and storage apparatus (claim 23), although both are constructed for specific use with cabinet doors and particularly both flush type cabinet doors and recessed type cabinet doors as set forth in the preambles to these claims.

While it is believed that the amendments made to the claims make it clear that the door itself is not being claimed other than as part of the combination in claim 17, the Applicants certainly stand ready to make whatever other corrections the Examiner deems to be necessary in this regard.

Turning to the merits, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims are clearly allowable over the prior art.

First of all, the Examiner has cited only two prior art references, the patents to Zelen and Watkins, and neither of these patents teaches anything that is applicable to a cabinet door. Rather, both patents are directed to apparatus for holding clothing on a closet door. It is respectfully submitted that this fundamental difference in itself is sufficient to distinguish the claims of the present invention from the prior art upon which the Examiner has relied.

It is even more clear that neither of the cited references discloses anything that is applicable to both a flush type cabinet door and a recessed type cabinet door, as claim 1 expressly requires. In particular, amended claim 1 calls specifically for brackets that are shaped to follow the contour of and mate with both a flush type cabinet door and a recessed type cabinet door. This is accomplished in the present invention by providing a bracket that has one portion shaped to follow the contour of and mate with a flush type cabinet door having an upper edge portion of substantially uniform thickness, and another portion shaped to follow the contour of and mate with a recessed type cabinet door having an upper edge formed in a stepped configuration with an upstanding lip adjacent to a ledge. This is best seen in Figs. 9 and 10 of the application drawings, and it is submitted that the prior art teaches nothing remotely similar.

While the Examiner has cited the Zelen patent and particularly the hanger 36 and the bracket 34, it is respectfully submitted that neither device could possibly be applied to a recessed type door having a stepped upper edge portion. The Examiner has apparently considered the bracket 34 to be capable of this function, but it is obvious from its configuration alone that it could not be applied to a stepped upper edge configuration and certainly could not follow the contour of or mate with a stepped upper edge configuration, nor is it intended for this purpose. On the contrary, its sole purpose is to provide a connection for the ropes that are used to support the coat hanger 12 and the tray 72. Clearly, any attempt to apply the bracket 34 to a stepped

upper edge configuration of a recessed cabinet door would be futile because the inwardly projecting tab 52 would make it impossible for the bracket 34 to fit on the upstanding lip of a recessed door.

It is respectfully submitted that the present invention is clearly novel over the prior art and also represents a significant improvement in that it is the only structure that can be applied to both a flush type cabinet door and a recessed type cabinet door. This feature is expressly set forth in amended claim 1, and it is clearly entitled to patent protection.

Claims 2-5, 7-8 and 12-16 are dependent claims that have been amended to reflect the changes made to independent claim 1 and to obviate the 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejections made by the Examiner. These claims are allowable by reason of their dependence upon an allowable parent claim, as well as on their own merits.

Claims 6 and 9-11 are canceled by this amendment.

Claim 17 is allowable for essentially the same reasons as amended claim 1. In particular, claim 17 calls for an L-shaped hanger and a C-shaped hanger which are both applicable to the upper edge of the door to support the hanger bracket on the door, a feature that is nowhere found in the prior art as previously indicated. Thus, claim 17 is submitted to be clearly allowable.

Dependent claims 18-20 have been canceled.

Claim 21 is an independent claim that is allowable for essentially the same reasons as claims 1 and 17. Again, the claim specifically sets forth a hanger bracket that is applicable to both a flush type cabinet door and a recessed type cabinet door having a stepped configuration, and this feature is absent from the prior art. Accordingly, amended claim 21 is submitted to be clearly allowable.

Dependent claim 22 has been canceled.

Claim 23 sets forth an L-shaped hanger and a C-shaped hanger for application to the two different types of cabinet doors, and the prior art teaches nothing remotely similar as indicated previously. Consequently, claim 23 is allowable along with dependent claim 24.

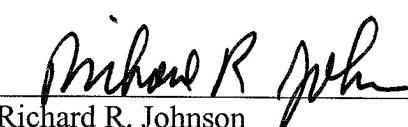
In summary, the claims of this application are allowable because (1) the prior art fails to teach any type of storage apparatus that is applicable to a cabinet door at all, let alone to both a flush type cabinet door and a recessed type cabinet door and (2) the prior art clearly fails to teach both an L-shaped hanger and a C-shaped hanger on the same bracket to provide the versatility enabling it to be applied in a practical manner to both a flush type cabinet door and a recessed type cabinet door. Thus, the present invention is not only novel but represents a significant improvement over the prior art entitling it to patent protection.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims remaining in the case are allowable and that this application is in condition for allowance. A formal notice to that effect is requested in due course. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference will in any way expedite the handling of this case, he is invited to contact the undersigned at his convenience.

Should any fees be necessitated by this response, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to deduct such fees from Deposit Account No. 11-0160.

Respectfully submitted,

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Richard R. Johnson
Reg. No. 27,452
Blackwell Sanders Peper Martin LLP
4801 Main St., Suite 1000
Kansas City, MO 64112
816-983-8000
ATTORNEYS FOR APPLICANT